

THE LATE SHOW

She is not in love with her husband, but she stays with him for the sake of the children. She is supposed to be in love with the dark haired foreigner man, who is duller and uglier than her husband but has a better contract with the movie studio. They often meet for dinner.

"Run away with me to my homeland," he pleads one night in a checker-board café.

"I can't," she says, staring down at her hands that are choking each other.

"But why?" he asks, bewildered.

"Because I hate that brown mole you have growing next to your left nostril," she says.

"Shall I wash it off?" he offers, rubbing it with his knuckle.

"No," she says, "Leave it on for the sake of the children."

AT SUNRISE

There were times when the night would be pierced by chirping birds. We'd run to the zoo and watch through black iron bars as the seals awoke and helped the penguins get dressed. Or we'd hunt for huge mechanical Japanese lizards that spit fire and ate cities. But mostly we'd sit in fast food restaurants drinking coffee and deciding what we were going to be the next day. Sometimes I was a war hero and you were the tattered orphan I would take under my wing. Other times I was a little girl and you were a starving artist who taught me how to hold my liquor at night. Yet other times I was a bottle of Coke and you were a pencil and we would flirt hopelessly across the desk top.

THE BREAD BOY

When he is among the big ones,
He is like a loaf of freshly baked
Whole wheat bread;
They pinch him, leaving their thumbprints
Like tiny bruises all over his body;
They cut him into bitesize pieces
And bring him to church in a golden goblet

As their Sunday offering.
 When his nails grow too long, they
 Chop them into croutons for their
 Dinner salads, while the meatloaf
 Is stuffed with his shoulders.
 When he is bad, they put him into a plastic bag
 And close it with a twist tie.
 He sits in the refrigerator,
 Barely breathing.
 But when he is good and guests come to visit
 They say,
 "This is our boy. We baked him ourselves."

-- Lydia Tomkiw

Chicago IL

solitary
 the rag
 rug in my
 own room
 kept to
 itself
 till the
 animals
 began
 to march
 & a dish
 of honey
 was brought

clouds
geese
 large-eyes
 birds
 anything!

cobblestones
running
 metal struts
 dandelion
 born
 & dies

ragged
clothes
 on
 scarecrows
 straws
 made into
 bodies
 red
 ribbons
 for
 buttons
 small
 black
 feet

catacombs
sneaking
 in a
 small
 place
 a candle
 held in
 both hands

stakeout
the
 hour
 of burglars
 in
 tartan
 pants

lobby
of an
old hotel
 a touch
 of mildew
 a round
 green mat
 an umbrella
 stand